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For Immediate Release
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September 6, 2011

A Water Pipeline No One Can Afford

Flaming Gorge Pipeline found to be two to 10 times more expensive than other water project proposals

BOULDER, CO --The most expensive water in the history of Colorado. That would be the dubious distinction of the proposed Flaming Gorge Pipeline. [A new report written by economist George Oamek](#) outlines the costs of the proposed pipeline to Front Range water users, impacts on the tourism and recreation economy on the Green River, and some of the financial risks that Westerners would bear.

The proposed Flaming Gorge Pipeline would move 81 billion gallons each year 560 miles from southwestern Wyoming to cities along Colorado's Front Range. The concept is proposed by both a private developer, Aaron Million, and a group of municipalities in Douglas County.

The project – estimated by the Colorado Water Conservation Board to cost \$7 to \$9 billion – would provide water two to 10 times more expensive than water from other proposed or recently developed water projects. The report finds Flaming Gorge water would cost up to \$4,700 per acre-foot per year, compared to several other proposed projects expected to cost less than \$700 per acre-foot per year.

“Flaming Gorge pipeline costs would be completely out-of-whack with what Coloradans can afford and should have to pay, especially when there are cheaper alternatives.” said Stacy Tellinghuisen, a water and energy expert with Western Resource Advocates.

Other recent water projects in Colorado have had substantial impacts on ratepayers. Colorado Springs' Southern Delivery System, which, at just under \$1 billion is a relative bargain compared to the proposed Flaming Gorge project, has led to multi-year, double-digit rate increases for customers, long before construction began. The Flaming Gorge Pipeline would result in even greater rate impacts.

Water providers and project proponents in Douglas County would be unable to foot the bill. Neither federal nor state government agencies are poised to subsidize enormous new water projects. The State of Colorado faced a 715 million dollar budget shortfall in 2011, leaving no funds available to pay for a multi-billion dollar water project.

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The cost of this pipeline project will not only be paid by those who use the water. The report finds that for the recreation-dependent economy in the rural region surrounding the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, the impact of losing nearly a quarter of the Green River's flow would reduce the region's recreation revenue by \$58.5 million per year, roughly a 19% hit to this economic sector.

"Local businesses like mine depend on the same water that the Flaming Gorge pipeline wants to divert away," said Zeke Hersh, the owner of Blue River Anglers. "The recreation industry supports a lot of working people in rural Colorado, and if visitors aren't drawn out here for the fishing and rafting, they won't be around to eat in local restaurants, shop in our stores , or stay in local hotels. Businesses here will take a hit."

The Colorado Water Conservation Board, when it meets on September 13th in Grand Junction, is considering whether to spend \$150,000 to fund a task force to study the Flaming Gorge Pipeline.

"The proposed task force would squander taxpayer dollars," said Elise Jones, of the Colorado Environmental Coalition. "The State of Colorado should be looking at projects that are affordable, viable, and collaborative, not spending money on gold-plated pipedreams."

[The full report is available online](#), along with [an executive summary](#), and a [quick overview of the report's findings](#).

Learn more about the pipeline at www.westernresourceadvocates.org/pipeline and www.stopflaminggorgepipeline.org

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